



Committee Members:

First of all, Faith & Freedom Coalition objects to casino gambling and race track gambling for all of the reasons you've heard, moral, social, and economic. We think casino gambling is the choice of desperados, and Georgia has too many good things going for it to be included in that category. But I hope that the sincere intention of these committees is to find solutions for the Hope Scholarship. I'm here today to discuss several potential solutions. There are many possibilities, but I hope these can get the discussion moving from revenue to cost-containment.

- **Homeschool Rules** – We homeschooled all of our children all the way through high school. Two of my daughters got the Hope Scholarship. As is the rule now, they had to come up with the money for the first year of study, then, if they maintained a B average or above, they were refunded their tuition, then granted eligibility for the next year. Believe me, they were highly motivated to succeed and both of them received their tuition repayments.

Although I have searched diligently for them, I don't have the latest statistics for the number of students who lose the Hope Scholarship at the end of freshman year. From a 2011 article in the Journal of Student Financial Aid\*, they reference a 2004 study, I quote "Interestingly, they also discovered that 70% of the entire cohort of HOPE freshman recipients at a USG institute lost their HOPE scholarship eligibility after attempting 30 quarter hours. Ultimately, only 13% of the freshman cohort maintained the scholarship for four years." I recommend this committee find out from the Student Finance Commission what that number is today. I predict that using the same system of tuition refund for all HOPE students would benefit two ways – it would save \$millions, and it would be powerful motivation to succeed the first year of college, with the advantage of a strong start spilling over into successive years.

*Note: The statistics came to me minutes before the testimony, so were not included. I have included them here, as they support this solution strongly. In 2015, 45,344 incoming GA freshman got either HOPE or Zell Miller scholarship. The 2015 study I referenced, from UGA is attached, and from what I can tell reading on my tablet, in the freshman class of 2008, 19,877 freshmen were awarded the HOPE scholarship. 1581 never completed the first year. Of those original recipients, at the end of first year, 11,000+ retained eligibility, but by 6 years later, only 7430 of them had retained HOPE eligibility until graduation. Notably, of 20861 freshmen entering in 2008 without HOPE eligibility, 1915 earned HOPE eligibility at the end of freshman year, 920 still had it when they graduated.*



- **Tuition Reduction** – Tuition costs have sky-rocketed at Georgia’s public universities. According to a study by the College Board\*\*, average in-state tuition for GA four year programs has gone from \$3411 to \$8094 per year. Please introduce some accountability for restraint to the Board of Regents.
- **SAT/ACT minimum** – At one time, SAT and ACT scores were predictive of college success. Commission a study to see if the students losing the HOPE scholarship typically fell below a certain score, and adjust eligibility (by school).
- **Limit majors for full scholarship** – How many “Sports Medicine” majors does Georgia really need? The rate of graduates in that field (and others) far outpaces the demand. Perhaps utilizing the Occupational Outlook Handbook and state specific knowledge, have HOPE pay for the first two years, then create a tier system for paying for declared majors. High-demand majors would be fully funded, lower demand majors, less funded.

I am confident that in this room and in the Georgia General Assembly, there is enough intelligence and creativity to solve the HOPE Scholarship shortfall without resorting to desperate means, like casino gambling, that will ultimately backfire. The Committee to Preserve the HOPE Scholarship could better serve Georgians by addressing costs rather than funding schemes. Thank you for your time and attention.

\*Condon, James V.; Prince, Lori H.; and Stuckart, Erik B. (2011) "Georgia’s HOPE Scholarship Program after 18 Years: Benefits, Unintended Consequences, and Changes," Journal of Student Financial Aid: Vol. 41: Iss. 1, Article 2. Available at:<http://publications.nasfaa.org/jsfa/vol41/iss1/2>

\*\*<http://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/tuition-fees-sector-state-time>

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